



State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SENIOR SERVICES
DIVISION OF EPIDEMIOLOGY, ENVIRONMENTAL AND OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH
PO BOX 369
TRENTON, N.J. 08625-0369

JON S. CORZINE
Governor

www.nj.gov/health

FRED M. JACOBS, M.D., J.D.
Commissioner

To: Health Officers

From: Simi Octania-Pole, Ph.D.
West Nile Virus Coordinator
Infectious and Zoonotic Disease Program

Date: April 11, 2006

Subject: Bird testing for WNV Surveillance and Supplemental Courier Service for WNV samples

I would like to thank you all for your cooperation and support during the 2005 WNV season. While we experienced a mild WNV season in 2005, we need to continue surveillance efforts to ensure the safety and protection of our residents. The following are some reminders, and general information to enhance communication and reporting.

The following is a list of personnel working for the WNV program. They can all be reached via phone at (609) 588 3121, and fax (609) 588 2546:

Simi Octania-Pole, Ph.D. – WNV Coordinator.

Shereen Brynildsen, MS – Epidemiologist – Shereen is in charge of WNV human surveillance.

Kim Bernini – Clerk Typist – all inquiries pertaining to bird report faxes, mosquito submittal sheets, copies of summaries, etc. should be directed to Kim.

Bird Testing and Reporting

The West Nile Virus Working Group recommended bird testing to begin as usual in mid April. We will continue to expand bird testing to the entire corvid family. The most common corvids found in NJ are crows and blue jays. Additional information on corvid species, including pictures, can be found at the following websites –

<http://www.montereybay.com/creagrus/corvids.html>

<http://www.shades-of-night.com/aviary/corvidae.html>

We will start bird testing on **April 17, 2006** and will determine an end date based on how the season progresses. As in previous years, the 5 positive birds per municipality limit policy will remain in effect. However, birds from new areas within a large

municipality with 5 positives may still be submitted for testing; please indicate on the Dead/Ill Bird Report/Lab Submission that the specimen is from a "New Area".

Please do advise residents to use gloves while handling dead corvids.

There is no change in the Dead/Ill Bird Report/Lab Submission forms this year. You can continue to use forms from 2004.

Please note that Dead/Ill Bird Reports for birds not submitted for testing still need to be entered into the system as bird reports, or sent to DHSS via fax at 609-588-2546. These are reported as "sightings". These data are crucial to enable prompt mosquito control and surveillance efforts on the local level, as dead crows are excellent early indicators of WNV activity in a locale.

If residents have questions regarding avian influenza and handling dead birds, please refer them to the guidelines posted on the state health website <http://nj.gov/health/er/avianflu.shtml>, especially the document [Public Reports of Bird Mortality: Guidance for Health Officers](#)

Positive Bird Notifications

As in previous years, we will continue to send email updates listing WNV positive birds and mosquito pools twice a week. However, in the beginning of the season, these updates will be sent only when positive birds and mosquito pools are reported.

Courier Service

LHDs can avail the services of the regular NJDHSS courier for sending avian samples to PHEL. In addition, Rutgers University will be providing supplemental courier services at the stops listed in the attachment. For the initial part of the season (till mosquito surveillance picks-up), please call 732-932-9341 Monday to Friday, and leave a message for Ryan Neary to schedule a pick up by the Rutgers courier.

For those dropping off samples themselves, please note the following update from PHEL. Effective, MARCH 1, 2006 there is a single point access for specimen delivery to the laboratory at the loading dock entrance, after clearance by the security booth. The Greenhouse entrance will no longer be open. The security office at the loading dock will now serve as the final security clearance for all specimen delivery. There will be assigned, posted parking for sample delivery vehicles in the loading dock area. SPECIMEN DELIVERY HOURS WILL BE 8:30 AM TO 4 PM.

Forms and protocols on the web

<http://www.state.nj.us/health/cd/westnile/enceph.htm>

Thanks again for your help and cooperation and I look forward to working with you in the upcoming months.